

## What are the Benefits of Freedom of Expression?

Freedom of expression is important to all people who live in a democracy because it supports our democracy. Our democratic system of government depends on the people's ability to make good decisions. To make good decisions you need to be able to get enough information to make up your mind. You need to hear and discuss different ideas and opinions. Discussing different points of view will help you in many ways. You can make reasonable choices about supporting leaders. You also will know which laws deserve your support.

Freedom of expression helps us grow as individuals. When you express your thoughts and listen to the ideas of others, you learn and become more mature. Hearing and discussing different points of view help you make thoughtful choices about what you think is right. You mature as a person when you make choices for yourself rather than just accepting what others tell you.

Freedom of expression advances knowledge. It is easier for you to make new discoveries and gain new knowledge when you can suggest ideas and exchange information freely. Even if some ideas do not work, they provide a way of testing the truth of other ideas.

Freedom of expression makes peaceful change in society possible. If you are free to try to persuade others to change things, you are less likely to use violence. We have improved many things in our country by using our right to freedom of expression. If we may criticize things we cannot change, we may be willing to have patience until we can get them changed.